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ABSTRACT

A review of the operation of and prognosis for a program of higher education and counseling, in and out of the institution and additional follow-up support services in post-release period, for inmates of a maximum-security prison is given. (NF)

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NewGate

**NEW
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NEWGATE: NEW HOPE THROUGH EDUCATION

"It is unreasonable to treat a man as an animal or automaton while he is serving his sentence, and then, at the finish of it, appeal to him as a human being to win his rightful place in society."

Winston Churchill

NewGate, it has often been said, is a "concept." Theoretically, perhaps. But to many men and women, it is also real, functioning programs working to motivate and aid offenders in their efforts to alter their lives. It offers post-secondary education, counseling, and follow-up services--options open to offenders only within the past decade.

Prisons originally were intended simply to isolate and punish, and if rehabilitation followed at all it was attributed to either or both. Not until almost the 19th century was even the most rudimentary form of education officially introduced into a U.S. prison. In 1798, the first prison school was established, but then only to provide the "three R's" as leisure-time occupation for inmates. Although a few institutions followed with similar programs, real change would not come for almost a century.

The starting point for this change was the American

Prison Association's endorsement, in 1870, of academic learning as one step in the path to reform. But again, sixty years would pass before the importance of education as an essential element in modern correctional treatment would be fully recognized.

A confluence of events occurred in the America of the 1930's that ushered in, along with the other great changes of the period, a change in approach to corrections. Not only had prison industries broken down, but new attitudes were developing with respect to education and offenders, fueled by the recommendations of sociologists, economists, and psychologists. Many offenders at the time had little or no formal education, and educational programs in the prisons proliferated. Across the nation, programs were established offering education through high school, including business courses and vocational training. For the most part, however, higher education was available only through correspondence--if at all.

During the next two decades high school programs flourished. Inmates were proving highly responsive and educable, and several received college degrees through correspondence. The first tentative experiments in counseling were attempted. Between 1962 and 1967, a smattering of pilot programs was initiated to test the feasibility of introducing college-level instruction into correctional institutions. The results were encouraging.